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VF

Livingston, F.A.

CENTER FOR RESTORATION STUDIES
ADILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Rest



Livingston's **SERMONS**



by

F. A. Livingston



BIOGRAPHY AND DEDICATION

Fleming Auston Livingston was born in Aiken County at Kitchings-Mill, South Carolina, February 12, 1899. When he was six years old his parents moved to Wagoner, South Carolina. Soon thereafter Fleming began going to school, walking about six miles daily, to Perry, South Carolina, where he attended the Perry Union Institute for about eleven years, at which time he graduated from the same institute. He was the valedictorian of his class of 15.

Shortly after this his father died, about two weeks after Fleming's graduation. Fleming's mother also died soon afterwards, leaving four children younger than he.

When Fleming was 18 years of age, he was married to one of his schoolmates, Martha Thomas, who was also a student in the Perry Union Institute. To this union was born three children—Rosa, Mary and Eleanor.

After a number of years this little family moved to Bradenton, Florida. At that time Brother Marshall Keeble came to Bradenton and conducted a gospel meeting; Fleming and all of his family obeyed the gospel of Christ in that meeting. They were all baptized in the Manatee River on December 6, 1931.

On February 12, 1932, Brother Livingston preached his first gospel sermon. He selected for his subject, "Which Way Are You Going?" He had studied hard and had prepared to deliver a sermon which should have taken at least half an hour; but when he stood up before the audience to deliver the sermon and saw so many eyes set on him, he finished within five or ten minutes. He says that when he "STOOD" it seems that all of his thoughts "SAT," and he wondered which way he should go.

Brother Livingston did not become discouraged but was willing to continue. His faithful wife by his side encouraged him in all of his efforts. Besides this, he was further instructed in the way of the Lord by Brother M. Keeble, who converted him; also by Brother John R. Vaughner, who baptized him; and by many others of our fine brethren, including S. T. W. Gibbs, S. M. Johnson, Luke Miller, all colored, and R. L. Colley, W. V. Anderson, Robert C. Jones, and many others among the white brethren. Brother B. C. Goodpasture gave Brother Livingston his first book of gospel sermons in 1934 while the latter was conducting a gospel meeting in Atlanta, Georgia.

After laboring for some time in the state of Florida, Brother Livingston went to Oklahoma and labored for about three years; after this, he went to Texas. He feels that his greatest work was accomplished while laboring in this state. He had a great part in establishing some 10 or 12 congregations, leading several hundred to Christ—including a number of preachers, deacons, and school teachers. He gives the credit to his many friends, both white and colored, who called him and supported him in gospel meetings. The glory he gives to God.

Brother Livingston attributes much of the help that he may have been to his fellowmen to his humble and faithful wife, Martha, who never complained, but who was willing to suffer with him and encourage him that he might go onward. To her this book is affectionately dedicated.

HELP FROM GOD

In this age much is said of man's independence. Many of the young people are urged to be independent and self-reliant. In a sense this is good, because it will help them to be more courageous in taking advantage of their opportunities and responsibilities rather than to shirk them.

It is said that a pig or a puppy only a few days old, when carried from its bed, will by instinct, find its way back, while a child under the same circumstances would be lost, though several years old. Children are dependent upon their parents until past the age when most animals are full grown.

We are all dependent upon each other for the material things of life, such as our homes, clothing, food, means of travel, and communication. These material things are all necessary to our happiness on earth; but let us not forget that without the help of God we could enjoy none of these things.

"God . . . made the world and all things therein . . . neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; . . . for in him we live, and move, and have our being." (See Acts 17:24-28)

Help in Trouble

After we have secured all the help we can from

our fellow man, we are still in need of God's help. David said, "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*" (Psalm 46:1). Again, "*Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that take refuge in him.*" (Nah. 1:7)

As long as things are going well with us, we seem to forget God; but just as soon as trouble comes upon us, we turn to Him. God is our refuge only when we obey Him. We must be faithful to Him before we can expect Him to help us; for He will not help evil-doers. (Job 8:20) We cannot find refuge in God as long as we remain in sin.

We must come into Christ (his church) before we can take refuge in God. When we come into Christ's church, we have help from God in time of affliction. (James 5:14-16)

However, we should not wait until we are sick or afflicted to pray to God. Sometimes afflictions come upon us for good. (See Psalm 119:71; 2 Cor. 12:7-9)

Help in Temptation

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10:13)

We see then that the help of God is available when temptations come. His word tells us what to do to avoid temptations — shun the very appearance of evil. (Rom. 12:9; 3 John 2) Things in which evil seems to appear — shun them! Stay away from them!

God has not promised to make a “way of escape” to sinners, but only to those who have come into Christ. Christians can find the way of escape from every temptation if they study God’s word.

Jesus answered Satan with the Scriptures. Jesus has set the example for us in resisting temptations. Let us follow His example. (Matt. 4:1-11)

All Our Needs Supplied

The needs of man are many and varied. Not all of them can be met by human means alone. Man’s needs may be classified into two groups — material and spiritual. The beasts of the field are satisfied with material things. They have no soul, and therefore have no need for spiritual things. Man does have a soul and must have spiritual food which can come only from God.

All Christians have an invitation to accept the help of God in time of need. James says, *“If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally . . . But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting . . . Every good gift and every perfect gift*

is from above." (Read James 1:5-17) It is not enough to *ask*, but we must do so in *faith*, believing that God will grant it according to his will and according to our needs.

Paul says, "*We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.*" (Heb. 4:15, 16) We cannot receive mercy without approaching "the throne of grace;" but no one can approach the throne of God in his sins, for it is sin that separates God and man. Therefore, before we can approach the throne of grace we must have our sins forgiven.

How do we obtain forgiveness of our sins? By obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ. How can one obey the gospel? To obey the gospel one must hear the word of God; he must hear how Christ suffered and died and was raised the third day; he must believe that Jesus is the Son of God; he must repent of all his sins (turn away from the practice of all that is wrong); he must confess with the mouth that Christ is the Son of God, and be buried with the Lord in baptism for the remission of his sins.

When one has done this, he can approach "the

throne of grace boldly, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Read Acts 2:37-47; 8:37, 38; John 6:69; Heb. 11:6).

REMEMBERING CHRIST

After God with a mighty hand had delivered his people from bondage in the land of Egypt, through their leader or teacher, Moses, He gave them a law. That law or covenant was to them alone. (Deut. 5:3)

They (Israel) were commanded to keep the Sabbath as a remembrance of their deliverance from bondage. They could not, or should not think of what a blessing it was to have been delivered, without thinking of the One who delivered them out of bondage, who was God.

They were also taught not to have any other God. (Deut. 4:3-20) What God did for Israel was wonderful, and they had a right to remember Him; but today we cannot be justified by the law which was given them, for it stood in carnal ordinances and could not take away sins forever.

Since Christ came, who was the manifestation of the love of God, we can be justified from all things, by which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:39) Since we are blessed with such spiritual blessings today which are found only in Christ (Eph. 1:3), let us remember Christ for what He did, for what He does, and for what He will do.

What DID He Do?

1. He became poor that we through HIS poverty

might become rich. (2 Cor. 9:8)

2. He set an example for us that we should follow His footsteps. (1 Pet. 2:21)

3. He died for our sins. (1 Cor. 15:3)

4. He arose and ascended. (Mark 16:9; Acts 1:2)

5. He gave us a plan of salvation. (Mark 16:15, 16)

What DOES He Do?

1. He invites us unto Him for rest. (Matt. 11:28)

2. He hears the prayers of those who obey Him. (Prov. 28:9; Luke 6:46)

3. He calls His people brethren (not reverend). (Heb. 2:11)

What WILL He Do?

1. He will come again. (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16)

2. He will raise the dead; those who die in Him will rise first. (1 Thess. 4:16, 17)

We are baptized into Him (Gal. 3:27), to wash away our sins (Acts 22:16), that we may be saved (1 Pet. 3:20, 21) when He comes to judge us (John 5:22; 2 Tim. 4:1, 2; John 12:46-48); and our salvation to some extent depends upon whether we REMEMBER THE THINGS OF CHRIST. (1 Cor. 15:1, 2).

COUNTING THE COST

(Luke 14:28; 1 Cor. 3:15)

From Luke 14:27-28 we find the following language used by our Savior: "*And whosoever doth not bear His cross, and come after Me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?*"

In the foregoing language, the Savior shows the importance of wise planning for building, whether material or spiritual. As we travel along the highways, and as we walk from place to place we will see a number of buildings that are framed, but have not been completed. In many cases, these buildings stand incomplete, because those who attempted to build them, failed to count the cost at the beginning.

Must Forsake All

Christ places emphasis on *first* counting the cost. Christ also shows the lack of wisdom in one who will build, and **then** count the cost. In the spiritual realm of life, many are making the same sad mistake of planning to build, without counting the cost.

From the same text employed, we see that one must forsake "all" to be a disciple of Christ. We cannot allow our parents, or relatives, or anyone to stand between us and our salvation. (Luke 14:26-33)

Some so-called Christians today want to be faithful, but will not forsake the “clubs” and “societies” to which they belong that are completely worldly in their nature. The Lord said, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.”* (1 John 2:15)

Some good people belong to worldly organizations because they believe it is all right to do so; but in so doing, they are trying to build without counting the cost. There is no worldly organization that can do more for us than the Lord can, if we are faithful to Him.

Reading from Phil. 4:19, we see that the apostle said, *“But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* What more can a worldly organization do? If we desire to be true disciples of Christ, let us “first” count the cost of discipleship:

(a) Let us have courage to give up the world (1 John 2:15) and all that is in the world (1 John 2:16).

(b) If our parents will not come to Christ, leave them in the world (Luke 14:26).

(c) If we are connected with worldly organizations leave them in the world. (Eph. 5:11; 1 John 2:15, 16; 2 Cor. 6:17).

Then Do What?

(1) *Hear* how Christ suffered, died, was buried, and raised (Heb. 2:1).

(2) *Believe* that with all of your heart (Acts. 15:7-9).

(3) *Repent*, by turning from the practice of all wrong (Acts 3:19).

(4) *Confess* Christ before men (Matt. 10:32).

(5) *Be baptized* washing away all your past sins (Acts 22:16)

Then your face will be turned heavenward (Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1).

FAITH "ONLY"

A great part of the religious world contends that a person is justified by "faith only," but there is no such doctrine taught in the word of God. If one is justified by faith alone, then he would also become a saved man by faith alone; for no one can claim justification in the sight of God in his sins. No one is saved outside of the church of the Lord. If faith alone justified one, it would also save one; and when one is saved, the Lord adds that one to his church. Therefore, you would have a man a member of the Lord's church by faith only. Acts 2:47 teaches whom the Lord adds to His church. It is "the saved." Faith only hasn't saved anyone yet, and never will.

If being justified by "faith only" could make one a member of the church, which church would it be? Friends, we had better think carefully now. And if this "faith only" makes one a member of the church, wouldn't it make all who have this faith members of the same church since there is but one faith? (Eph. 4:5).

Then if this one faith makes all of our religious folk members of one church (for if it made them members of any at all it would have to be the same kind), why do they all not fellowship each other? Why do they not worship God together?

Many times you will find a town where there are hardly 150 people and all believe in that "faith only" business; but they are divided up into two or three churches, and all together would not make a good one.

Something is wrong!

I am going to refer you to some Bible characters who had "faith only;" but *not a one of them was saved*. You can read and draw your own conclusions.

Turn first to John 12:42 and you will read: "*Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed (had faith) on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him (why?), lest they should be put out of the synagogue.*" Here is a case of that "faith only" business, and it is dangerous. Many would confess and obey the Lord today if they were not afraid of losing out with their friends, losing out in their pulpits.

Again in John 8:31: "*Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed Him, If (the greatest difference) ye abide in My word, then (and not until then) are you truly My disciples.*" We pass on to verse 44 and hear Jesus telling them: "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do.*" Don't you see that we found some folk that had "faith only" but had the wrong father; and those that are saved cannot afford to claim salvation with such a father as that?

In James 2:19 we read: "*Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder.*"

So then if I stopped at believing, or "faith only," you see what a fix that would put me in. I pray that those who may chance to read this will be led by faith to OBEY God that they may be saved.

In writing to those who were saved Paul said: "*But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were the servants of sin, ye became OBEDIENT from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.*" (Rom. 6:17, 18). That did not happen by faith only.

May we be able to realize that Christ became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY Him! We must *purify* our souls by obeying the truth (1 Pet. 1:22), which is God's word through which faith comes (John 17:17; Rom. 10:17). By so doing we will be saved through OBEDIENCE, which includes *more than "faith only."* (Rev. 22:14).

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

One of the greatest expressions used in the New Testament is "the blood of Christ."

Blood occupied a special place in God's plan while His people, the Jews, were governed by the law of Moses. God commanded His people to use blood.

The night when the death angel smote the first-born among the Egyptians, God commanded His people to prepare themselves against the visit of the death angel by taking the blood of animals without spot and applying it on the door posts of their homes, so that when the death angel saw the blood thus applied, he would pass over them, and they would be safe from destruction because they were hidden behind BLOOD.

The blood of animals was used to make atonement for the souls of the people also. (Lev. 17:11). Blood and ashes were used to sprinkle the unclean. (Heb. 9:14).

But CHRIST'S blood is *superior* to the blood of animals. (Heb. 9:14). Blood of animals could not take away sins; if so, they would have ceased to offer it (that is, such an offering need not be repeated) (Heb. 10:1-4). The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins. (1 John 1:7). For we are washed in Christ's

blood. (Rev. 1:5). The washing takes place in baptism. (Acts 22:16). Baptism brings us into the death of Christ. (Rom. 6:3-4); and Christ shed His blood in His death. (John 19:33-34). Without shedding of blood there is no remission. (Heb. 9:22).

No one can be saved in his sins. We cannot be redeemed therefrom without the blood of Christ. So, it is very necessary that we learn how to reach the blood of Christ in order to be saved from our sins.

There are five steps which *lead* to the blood of Christ. They are as follows: First, we must hear that Christ died, was buried, and was raised from the grave. Second, we must believe that. (Heb. 11:6). Third, we must repent of all sin by turning from the practice of it. (Acts 17:30-31). Fourth, we must then confess Christ before men. (Matt. 10:32). Fifth, we must then be buried with Christ in water baptism. (Rom. 6:1-4). Then we will come forth with all past sins forgiven. (Cor. 2:12).

Dear reader, will you accept this God-given plan, make the above mentioned steps that you may be made free from all your sins? May our love for our blessed Savior cause us to obey Him before it is too late. TODAY is the day of salvation. NOW is the acceptable time. (Cor. 6:2).

ARE YOU SURE

From the Bible we are taught that the time is coming when each must stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of his deeds (2 Cor. 5:10). That will be a day of separating; some will be assigned to everlasting life, and some to a place of misery and woe (Matt. 25:31-33 & 46).

In view of the foregoing facts, we should ask ourselves this question: "AM I SURE THAT I HAVE OBEYED THE LORD?" Only those who obey the Lord will enter through the gates into the City (Rev. 22:14).

If you haven't obeyed the Lord, there isn't any need to call on him in prayer (Luke 6:46; 1 Jno. 3:22).

Some think that to obey Christ means that we must keep every commandment that we find any place in the Bible; but that is a sad mistake. Under the old covenant there were a number of things commanded by the Lord to people *then* that would not be lawful *now*. Before the death of Christ, the law of Moses existed. Christ was born under that law (Gal. 4:4). He kept that law perfectly, fulfilling it (Matt. 5:17), brought it to an end (Rom. 10:4), and nailed it to the cross (Col. 2:14). After the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, our Lord, all power was given to him (Matt. 28:18). Therefore, whosoever hears

and does HIS SAYINGS (not the sayings of Moses), He will liken him unto a wise man (Matt. 7:24).

Christ referred to a number of things in the law of Moses to be observed by them that were under it. But we are not under that law now, but under grace (Gal. 3:23-25; Rom. 7:6). We see then that we are to obey the gospel of Christ, and to look to Him for salvation for he has ALL POWER (Matt. 28:18). He is the author of eternal salvation *to all who OBEY him* (Heb. 5:8-9). ARE YOU SURE YOU HAVE OBEYED CHRIST?

When we teach alien sinners to pray, we are not obeying Christ. He does not hear in the sense that he answers their prayers (Isa. 59:1-2; John 9:31; 1 Pet. 3:12). We must do what Jesus commands us to do before he will hear our prayers (Acts 22:16; Luke 6:46; 1 John 3:22-23). A child cannot ask its parents for favors before it is born into the family and the alien sinner cannot ask the Lord for favors until after he has been born into HIS family.

We do not obey Christ when we call preachers "REVEREND." That title belongs to God only (Psalms 111:9). No preacher was called by that title until June 11th, 1657. No apostle or disciple was ever called by that name or title. If so, where is the proof?

We do not obey Christ when we VOTE on men to become members of a church. We VOTE for presi-

dents and governors, but not on God's job . Almost all church members have been voted on, and they did not obey the Lord.

We cannot use mechanical instruments of music in the worship and obey the Lord; he never commanded their use. No apostle practiced, or commanded it. We are commanded to SING in new testament worship (Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19).

You may be honest and still be wrong (Prov. 16:25). Remember, that in order to be saved, we must obey the teaching of Christ through the apostles. He (Christ) prayed for all who would believe on him through their (the apostles') word (John 17:14,20).

We are not living under the law of Moses, but under grace and truth (John 1:17). We are not saved by keeping the law of Moses, but condemned (Gal. 3:10-13; Acts 13:38-39). But we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). Grace came TEACHING us to deny ungodliness (Titus 2:11-12). Therefore, since grace came teaching and brings salvation, we will have to obey the TEACHING OF GRACE.

Through grace we are taught to: HEAR THE GOSPEL (Mark 12:29; Acts 15:7), BELIEVE in Christ (John 8:24), REPENT of our sins by turning

from all wrong-doings (Acts 17:30), CONFESS Christ before men (Matt. 10:32), then be BAPTIZED to wash our sins away (Acts 22:16; Col. 2:12), then we can be SURE WE HAVE OBEYED THE LORD. (Heb. 5:8-9).

FALSE TEACHERS

2 Peter 2:1

One of the most dangerous things in the world is a FALSE TEACHER. Any religious teacher who does not teach the truth may be branded as a FALSE TEACHER.

After our savior died on the cross, and was raised from the grave, he met his disciples in a place appointed them, and gave to them the great commission, saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:19-20)

We can see that anyone who may teach that which the Lord has not commanded is a FALSE TEACHER. The apostle was careful to tell us that such teaching would be prevalent in the world today (2 Pet. 2:1). God has said much about FALSE PROPHETS and TEACHERS. Hear Him: "*I have not sent these prophets yet they ran; I have not spoken to them yet they prophesied.*" (Jer. 23:21) We can see that such teachers teach without any authority from God, therefore such teachings are *not according to God's will* and are nothing but false teachings.

Referring to such teachers the scriptures say: *"Then the Lord said unto me, the prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them"* (Jer. 14:14).

My friends, we can see from the foregoing that when any religious teacher teaches that which is not in harmony with the word of God, he is a FALSE TEACHER. Such teaching will lead men astray instead of saving them (Jer. 50:5-6).

God hates all false ways (Psa. 119:104). Though such a way may seem right in the sight of men, it will lead them to eternal death (Prov. 14:11-12; 16:25). The devil is the author of all such teaching, and he has a great number of preachers "peddling" such in the world today (John 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:15).

We should not accept the teaching of any false teacher, for his doctrine will destroy the soul! But, we should receive the word of God, the gospel of Christ, which is able to save our souls (Jas. 1:21). Friend, will you consider this today?

FALSE TEACHERS may be branded as BLIND LEADERS. Those who are led by such teachers will finally be destroyed (Matt. 15:14). The word of God forbids us teaching contrary to the inspired teaching of the apostles (Gal. 1:6-9). We are not to receive, or encourage anyone who fails to teach, or bring the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9:10).

Only through gospel teaching or preaching may one expect to learn the truth. No true gospel preacher will teach or preach that which is not *written*, or is not in harmony with the teaching of the word of God. Therefore, it is always safe to accept that which is found *written*, for we are told in the scriptures that one may believe that which is *written*. (John 20:30-31).

The truth will make men free if they will obey it (John 8:31-32; Rom. 6:17). If we believe, and obey that which is *not* written, we will be *lost*. (2 Thess. 2-11).

The apostle told the people to save themselves. One may save himself by doing what the savior said (Acts 2:40; Matt. 1:21; Heb. 5:8-9). Therefore in the scriptures referred to we understand that we cannot obey man and at the same time obey Christ. We ought to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29).

Only those who obey the Lord will be saved. As long as we continue to obey false teachers, we will obey MEN rather than GOD, for the scriptures say: "*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*" (Rom. 6:16) If I told you to do certain things and you did them, you would be obeying me. If a gambler tells you to do something and you do it, you would be obeying the gambler. If Christ tells

us to do certain things to be saved and we do them, we will be obeying him. That is what all of us *should* do; for by *so doing*, we will become a *friend to Christ* (John 15:14), and he will save us because of our obedience to Him (Heb. 5:8-9).

When alien sinners are taught to pray for pardon, they are obeying man. God will not answer their prayers (Prov. 15:29; John 9:31). If one is taught to “*get religion*,” that is false teaching, for religion is something that God’s children are told to DO—not GET. (Jas. 1:26-27)

If one is taught that he should be voted on to be saved, that is false teaching; for we cannot find where it was taught, or practiced in the gospel of Christ. If we are taught that we can be saved without baptism, we are being taught wrong; for we are saved *after* we are scripturally baptized (Mark 16:15-16; 1 Pet. 3:20-21).

[Dear reader, will you accept this simple plan of salvation? Will you hear the facts concerning Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection? (Mark 12:29) Believe them? (John 8:24) Repent of all your sins? (Acts 17:30) Then boldly confess him? (Matt. 10:32) Then be buried with him in baptism? (Rom. 6:4-5) Then all of your past sins will be forgiven (Acts 22:16). We cannot be saved without it. (1 Pet. 3:20-21).]

WORKS OF THE DEVIL

Criminals disguise themselves when sought so that they may not be easily detected, and, by so doing, may escape punishment if possible. When referring to the works of the Devil, Jesus said, "*Beware of false prophets (the Devil's agents) which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly, they are ravening wolves.*"

We are not to judge Satan by his appearance, because like the criminal, he disguises himself, and makes it difficult to detect him from others; but we will know him by the things he does. If Satan came to us wearing a long tail, sharp and forked at its end, and long horns on his head (like many of the old folks said he did) very few of us would fail to identify the old deceiver, because the marks of identification would be easily seen.

Satan is king of the world (in the wicked sense), therefore he worries not about it, but he is after the people of God. Turn to Job 1: 6 and we will see that when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, SATAN came along with them. He wasn't invited; he volunteered. That is why we need to be on our guard; because he voluntarily comes around, seeking whom he may devour.

When God's people come together today, Satan sometimes joins himself to that company, and takes

a seat. We must learn how to handle the old deceiver. Our parents of old taught us that when bad company came to visit our home to refuse to offer them a seat, and they would soon stop coming. Be careful not to show too much hospitality to Satan.

It seems that the church at Pergamos had permitted Satan to be seated among them, and even though the church held fast his name, and denied not the faith, they (the church) had among them those who taught the wrong doctrine; and this was held against the church. They were told to repent. (Rev. 2:12-16)

Where Satan is allowed to sit, the wrong things will soon happen. Satan is a great tempter, our Saviour was offered the third temptation by him, one after the other, but Christ did not yield—did not offer him a seat—so Satan soon left. (Matt. 4:3-11; Heb. 4:15)

Satan is like a good fisherman, he carries more than one kind of bait, so if one kind does not entice us the other will.

Satan lies. (Gen. 3:4; Jno. 8:44) Satan, through a man and his wife, lied to God. (Acts 5:1-4) If a man will lie to God, he will lie to anyone.

Satan hinders us from doing God's will; he hindered Paul on one occasion at least. (1 Thess. 2:18) He (Satan) will hinder us from loving our enemies, forgiving those who do us wrong; he will make us

hate one another; he transforms himself, and takes his seat wherever he can. (See 2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:13). He will hinder you from obeying the gospel of Christ. Do not obey his doctrines. (1 Tim. 4:1)

We are saved by the gospel of Christ, which requires us to HEAR (Mark 12:29), BELIEVE (Heb. 11:6), REPENT of our sins (Acts 17:30), CONFESS Christ (Matt. 10:32) and BE BAPTISED (Acts 22:16). Then the Lord will add you to his church (Acts 2:47). He only adds those who are saved.

GOD CANNOT LIE

In Num. 23:19, we read: "*God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*" The foregoing proves that whatever God has said is truth; and all of his promises are certain to be fulfilled if we meet the conditions on which they are made.

We are informed that God in times past spoke to the people through the prophets, but speaks to us through his son today. (Heb. 1:1,2) When we deny the teachings of Christ being true, we make God a liar.

God said that the Gospel is the power on earth to save men today (Rom. 1:16); but man is continually calling on God to send some *extra* power direct from heaven to save him. God said the GOSPEL is the power to save—and he cannot lie.

If we preach the gospel of Christ, and men obey it, they will be saved from their past sins. We have that assurance; for he cannot lie. (Rom. 6:17,18)

God said there is just one way to heaven: man says, take the way of your choice. Can there be a choice of apples, where there is but one? Choice is made where there are more than one thing from which to choose. If we get to heaven, we must take the way God said we must go; for he cannot lie, and he said

“one way.” (Jer. 32:38,39; John 14:6; John 10:1)

God said, all spiritual blessings are in Christ. (Eph. 1:3) Then one must be in Christ to enjoy them; for there are none outside. God cannot lie.

God said he was the savior of the BODY; then one must be in that body to be saved. There is “BUT one body.” (1 Cor. 12:20) That body is the church of Christ. (Eph. 1:22,23) Salvation is in no other. (Acts 4:12)

Many religious teachers teach the people they are saved by GRACE! and we are; but false teachers fail to tell the people that grace came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17); and when grace came, it came TEACHING! Teaching what? Teaching that it brings salvation when we live “soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-13). Then we must obey the teachings of grace before we can be saved. God cannot lie.

God said baptism washes away our sins. (Acts 22:16; Col. 2:12) Man says they are forgiven before; but God cannot lie. (Heb. 6:18)

Man teaches that when the sinner prays to God and asks forgiveness, he is forgiven upon his prayer, and the atoning blood is applied to his soul right then and there. But God said through the apostle, that we are WASHED from our sins IN Christ's blood (Rev. 1:5). God cannot lie.

The great trouble is that most false teachers, if not all of them, have not learned how to reach the blood of the lamb. From John 19:34 we learn that Christ's side was opened in his death. Yes, he was already dead when the soldiers pierced his side, therefore he shed his blood in his DEATH.

Then if one learns where to reach his death, he can reach the cleansing blood the same place. So rush on over to Rom. 6:1-4 and we see that baptism brings one into Christ's *death*; hence it is *there* we reach the blood that cleanses us from *all* sins. (1 John 1:7; Col. 2:12,13)

Therefore that makes baptism essential to salvation; for it brings us into the *death of Christ*, where we reach the *blood* that cleanses from ALL sins.

So if you are a disbeliever, you should hear (Mark 12:29); the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4); then believe it (John 8:24); repent of your sins (Luke 13:3-5); confess Christ (Matt. 10:32); then be baptized (Col. 2:12,13); and God will wash your sins away (Acts 22:16).

Don't be like the generation "pure in their own eyes" who yet haven't been "WASHED from their filthiness." (Prov. 30:12) I beg you GO WASH!

DON'T "THUMB" YOUR WAY

As we travel the various highways, almost daily we see quite a number of people standing on the highways trying to "thumb" their way from place to place. No doubt in many such cases, those who try to thumb their way from place to place do so because they don't want to pay the fare, or haven't it to pay. They are not particular as to the type of car they try to thumb, just so it looks possible to get a ride.

Though we hate to pass by one walking on the roadside when it is possible to give him a lift, we are sometimes afraid it isn't safe to pick him up for fear of being harmed. Sometimes honest men are refused for fear of picking up the wrong man (one who may harm us). It is always best to purchase a ticket when planning to travel, and you won't have to take chances on someone picking you up on the motion of your thumb.

The foregoing reminds me of the religious world today. Folks are on the religious highways of life trying to "thumb their way to heaven" instead of purchasing a ticket. Just as those who thumb their way don't care anything about the model of the car they thumb for a ride just so they get in something and ride, the same seems to be true with our religious friends. They will "thumb" down any church coming their way. They do not care what model it is — METHODIST, BAPTIST, PRESBYTERIAN, AD-

VENTIST — anything will do.

We are all on a journey, and it is better to obey the gospel of Christ and get a ticket to heaven, than to stand by the religious highways of life trying to thumb your way. There is only ONE WAY that leads to heaven—and that is through Christ. Jesus said, “I am THE WAY.” (John 14:6)

How can we enter Christ this way? By hearing how he suffered and died, and was buried, and was raised from the dead. (Mark 12:29) Then believing that with all of our heart (John 8:24), repenting of our sins by quitting the practice of everything that is wrong (Acts 17:30,31), then confessing Christ before men with our mouth (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9,10), then being buried with Christ in water baptism to wash our past sins away (Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27).

We enter Christ this way, for baptism brings us *into Christ* (Gal. 3:27). Remaining in him faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10), we shall be taken to heaven, and will not have to thumb our way.

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

"FATHER FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO." (Luke 23:34)

A more sublime utterance has not been spoken by man from the first words of Adam until now. The son of God, Jesus, the Savior of the world, was on a cruel cross, made for crucifying hardened criminals. There was one such criminal on either side of him at the time of this utterance. One of them voluntarily stated: "*We receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man (Christ) has done nothing amiss.*"

This is a prayer to the Father for sinful men, who were shamefully treating the one who prayed for them. He has taught us to "pray for them which despitefully use you." He showed us how.

This prayer is addressed to the Father. "Father, forgive them." This teaches us who forgives sin. It also teaches that Jesus was and is one being, and God is another. The one prayed to the other.

"*They know not what they do.*" I do not think they were unconscious and just did not know what they were doing; but they did not know the magnitude of the act, for they had not accepted him as the son of God and looked upon him as just another criminal being put to death. Paul states their ignorance in the following way: "*Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not*

have crucified the Lord of glory." (I Cor. 2:8) So we conclude that they did not know him to be the Lord of glory when they nailed him to the cross.

Can we tell the Lord's attitude today toward people who do not honor him with their lives? Does he still say, "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*"? Can we believe that can be said of many who have lived near the church for years and years and have not tried to learn the Lord's will? Does the Lord promise to forgive men who do not repent of their sins and make no effort to obey him? (Rom. 6:17; 2 Thess. 1:7-9) Did Jesus really promise them forgiveness without their obeying him, even on the cross?

No, he asked the Father to forgive them; but he had to die for them and become the author of their salvation (Heb. 5:8,9), before they could be saved. It took the blood of Christ to save lost souls, and that was shed in his death.

About 50 days after Jesus prayed for those who crucified him, Peter preached to the same people and told them that they had "*by wicked hands crucified him.*" This went straight to their hearts, and they asked what they should do. We ask the question: What did they want to know? What to do. Do for what? I judge from the answer that they wanted to know what to do "for remission of sins." Peter's answer to their question could be construed in no other

Father and the Son were interested in their salvation for whom Jesus had prayed some 50 days before this. We read: *"They that gladly (not MADLY) received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."* (Acts 2:41)

Our observation from this is that it is always right to pray for the Lord to save sinners, as Jesus did; that when we pray for them, we should try to get them to hear and obey the gospel, as the Lord and the apostles did; for the very way they were saved is exactly the way all must be saved today. And no one can expect to be saved until he obeys the Lord; for he (Christ) became the *"author of eternal salvation to all who obey him."* (Heb. 5.8-9)

THE SABBATH DAY.

There is much being said about the "SABBATH DAY" among religious people of today, and not a few have been misled in believing that the Sabbath Day is binding on Christians today, or that such a day should be observed in a special way by all nations today. This is a very important subject, and demands our very best attention.

The first mention of the Sabbath is found in Exodus 16:22-26. It was included in the "Ten Commandments"; therefore, it was a part of the covenant. See Deut. 4:13; also Exodus 34:28.

Adventists claim that the Sabbath is of pre-Mosaic existence because of the statement found in Exodus 20:8 which says "*Remember the Sabbath Day.*"

Let us turn now to the word of God and find out WHEN, WHERE, and to WHOM it was given. As to WHEN, it was after the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Turn to Ezek. 20:10-12, let us read: "*Wherefore I caused them (Israelites) to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness . . . moreover, also I gave them (Israel) my Sabbaths.*" (This tells exactly who the Sabbath was given to, and we don't have to guess at it, or pray over it. Now, let us notice, the very next sentence which says "*to be a sign between me (God) and them (Israel), that they may know that I am the*

Lord that sanctify them (Israel)."

Now listen friends, the Sabbath was given to people who were 1) brought out of Egypt and into the wilderness. Were you brought out of Egypt into the wilderness. If not, then this statement is not applicable to you.

We learn from Deut. 4:13; Exodus 34:23 that the SABBATH was in the Covenant. But let us turn now to Deut. 5:1-22 and learn to whom the covenant was given. READ IT: "*And Moses called all ISRAEL, (not everybody) and said unto them (ISRAEL) (no one else had any right to heed the message but the ones to whom it was addressed). The statutes and judgments which I speak in your (ISRAEL'S) ears this day, that ye (ISRAEL) may learn them, and do them, and keep them.*" If Israel had always had them, and had been doing, and keeping them, why did Moses tell them to LEARN THEM?

Turn with me now to Deut. 5:3 and let us read: "*The lord made not this covenant (which included the Sabbath) with our fathers, but with us (what US?) even us who are all of us here alive this day.*" Were you ALIVE THAT DAY?

Reading from Deut. 5:12-22 we will find that the people to whom the sabbath was given were to observe a number of other things. They were forbidden to do certain things. But our Adventist friends GRAB

SABBATH KEEPING, and FLEE those other things.

Sometimes, when our wives bake or make biscuits they use flour, salt, baking powder, milk and perhaps a bit of baking soda; but if we liked biscuits made with MILK ONLY, then we should have to refuse those baked with those things just mentioned. We absolutely would have to turn those biscuits down because they contained other things besides MILK. Our Adventist friends like the COVENANT BAKED WITH THE SABBATH IN IT, but they do not want it with those other things in it. So, they will have to refuse the whole Covenant which includes the SABBATH in order to miss those other things they do not like in the Covenant.

We cannot be saved unless we obey the Lord. Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 22:14. The same God that commanded Israel to keep the Sabbath ALSO commanded that they do the other commandments.

Some Adventists claim that the covenant was divided into what they call *The MORAL Law* or *Decalogue*, which was written on tables of stone, and the CEREMONIAL Law. Where do we find that Jesus and the apostles ever made such distinctions? We conclude the Sabbath was given to Israel to remember THEIR (not our) deliverance from Egyptian bondage. How can one be delivered from something that he was never IN?

It (the Sabbath) was a sign between ISRAEL and God, not between US and God. If I should give an engagement ring to a certain lady it would be a SIGN between ME and *that particular LADY*, and not a sign between ME and ALL LADIES!

The law of Sinai was added because of transgression until the SEED should come, Gal. 3:19. He (Christ) would fulfill the Law, Matt. 5:17. Christ was that seed which would bring the law to an end, by fulfilling it. (Gal. 3:16.) But the Law included the Sabbath, and if the law ended, the Sabbath ended. If not, why not?

God found fault with them. (Heb. 8:7-9; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-9) So since the first Covenant included the Sabbath, and the second was to be unlike the first, then the second would not include the Sabbath. It (the Sabbath) was blotted out. (Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:1-6)

Christians today, being led by the spirit through the apostles teaching, look forward with confidence to their rest. (Heb. 4:9) But they must WORK to enter that rest. (Phil. 2:12; Rev. 2:10; 14; 13) Work was *forbidden* on the Sabbath; so whosoever is justified by the law is fallen from grace. (Gal. 5:4; 3:24-25)

Friends, don't be guilty of the claim that you are keeping the Sabbath. (Col 2:16) The apostle Paul

mentioned a few things in Col. 2:16-17 of which the Sabbath was one, and said those things were a shadow of things to come. Why wrestle with a SHADOW when you can get the REAL THING? If you had worked hard all day long, and your wife would bake a nice tender ham and set it where you could see the SHADOW of it, would you be filled with the SHADOW? Would you rather prefer the SHADOW or the real thing?

DOING WHAT HE SAID

Reading the second chapter of John, we learn that there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also called or invited.

It was a grand thing to have such characters present on such an occasion. Would it not also be grand if when we come together on social occasions that the nature of the occasion would be such that we could invite Jesus? But often it cannot be said of us—some of us—for on many occasions we find people coming together to play card games, to engage in dancing contests, or drinking parties. On such occasions we do not invite Christ nor could we afford to.

We notice in verse three, when they wanted wine the mother of Jesus informed him of their need. It is wonderful to keep in close contact with Christ that we may make known our needs to him. Then his mother told the servants to do whatever he said (no more and no less).

Christ commanded the servants to fill the waterpots with water, and they did exactly what he said. As a result of their obedience they were able to pour out and bear new wine, which was the best.

The greatest need of man today is not new wine, but the salvation of his soul. And the same Christ that commanded the waterpots to be filled with water

has told man what to do to be saved.

Jesus said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*" (Mark 16:15,16) After you have heard how Christ suffered and died (Mark 12:29), believed that (John 8:24); repented of your sins (Acts 17:30); confessed Christ (Matt. 10:32); then been baptized (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 22:16), he (Christ) will save you from your past sins.

If the servants, when told to fill the waterpots with water, had filled them and then prayed over the pots, they would doubtless have been without any wine. They would have done *more* than he said. And if we pray *before* we are baptized, we will be without salvation, because we will have done more than he said, and it is dangerous to add to God's word. (Prov. 30:5,6).

THE WAY TO HEAVEN

The word "heaven" is one that is often used by almost all religious people; and most of them express a desire to go there. It is true that heaven will be a prepared place for a prepared people. To this I must agree. We must prepare ourselves for that place by meeting the requirements that are made known in the will of God.

On one occasion Jesus said "*Not every one that saith up to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" (Matt. 7:21) We can see that in order to make heaven our home we must do the will of God.

When Jesus came into the world, he came to do the will of God, his father. Hear him: "*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*" (John 6:38) So, when we do the will of Christ, we do the will of God.

The majority of all people in the world are religiously inclined; they believe in something. But the thing which they believe in may not be in harmony with the will of God. One may be honest in all religious activities, but unless he does that which is pleasing in the sight of God, his labor is all in vain.

While one is ignorant of the will of God, the things

that are wrong in the sight of God may seem right in the sight of men. "*There is a WAY which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Prov. 14:12).

A great number of people really believe there are many ways for them to reach heaven. It is also taught by many that we are all going to the same place (heaven); for we are using the same bible, serving the same God, but just traveling over different roads. I met a man some time ago who knew that I was a minister in the church of Christ and perhaps had heard me preach before. He informed me that he had read in the bible, but did not believe that we all had to go the same way in order to get to heaven. He said that he and I could go to the city of Lubbock, Texas, but we could take different roads, or different ways, and yet we would reach the city.

I could see that he did not understand that going to heaven was not like going to town. There are many ways that lead into some towns or cities; but there is but one way leading to heaven. It was Jesus who said "*I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the father, but my me.*" (John 14:6). Since Christ is the way, there could not be more than one way. Long before Christ came to earth God promised the people ONE heart, and ONE WAY (Jer. 32:39). And if we have more than one way, we have more than God promised.

Man has no reason to believe there are many ways leading to heaven if he can and will read the plan of salvation as it is taught in the word of God. It seems that some people think if they learn that the bible teaches that there isn't but one way to heaven, it would mean that some of their loved ones will be lost; and they do not want to accept any teaching that will condemn what their loved ones have done. Remember, my friends, that God is not a respecter of persons. He that has done wrong, will in the day of judgment receive a reward according to that which he has done; and there is no respect of person with God (Col. 3:25). Men do not seem to know that God is not responsible for the many ways taught by man; and therefore is not responsible for any man taking the wrong road, and winding up in the wrong place.

Christ, in speaking of the way that leads to heaven, did not speak of "some way" or "one of the ways," but he talked about "THE WAY." Hear him: "... because strait is the gate and narrow is THE WAY that leads to life and few there be that find IT." He did not say "few there be that find THEM." For there isn't but one way. (Matt. 7:14).

Friends, we must take up the cross and follow Christ. He did not say "drag the cross and follow me," but rather take it up. No doubt Christ would have many followers if he would permit us to drag the cross and follow him; but we must take it up and follow

him, or we cannot be disciples of his. (Luke 14:27; 9:23).

Since we are to follow Christ and he is the way, we cannot follow in but the one way for he is the way (John 14:6; 10:1-9). It is ridiculous to think of two men, both claiming to be followers of Christ, while one is going one way, and other another way.

We cannot walk with Christ unless we agree with him. For two cannot walk together unless they have agreed (Amos 3:3). When men disagree and walk not together, at least one of them has not agreed with Christ and it is possible that neither has.

This way that Jesus said leads to life is a strait, narrow way (Matt. 7:14). The prophet spoke of it as the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed (Isa. 35.8).

In thinking of the narrow way of which Christ spoke in Matt. 7:14, perhaps some one is ready to say, "I'm broad-minded," and count himself wiser than the average man. But it is not a mark of wisdom to allow sin to go unchallenged, or to fail to correct those who are in error. If I should find a man eating rat poison, believing that he was eating potato salad, I would stop him if I could. And I do not think that I would be called a "narrow-minded man" for doing so, but doubtlessly a WISE man.

There are thousands of people today partaking of the doctrine of men and think that they are partaking of the word of God. The word of God, in value and taste, is as far above the doctrine of men as potato salad is above rat poison. Rat poison is made to KILL, while potato salad will help one to LIVE. Those who accept the doctrine of men are sure to die a spiritual death; but the word of God gives life (John 6:63).

People who are *too* broad-minded are usually *worldly minded* and they travel the *broad way which leads to destruction* (Matt. 7:13). The narrow way that leads to life is too narrow for some people. That is why if we are too broad-minded we cannot get into the narrow way that leads to life. We will be like the man who tried to put a peck of peas into a quart jar. He had more peas than JAR. So if we are broader than the way that leads to life we will not be able to enter.

The bible speaks of ways that are wrong; that is why we should study to avoid those ways that are wrong. For instance, we read of: "*The way of the transgressor*" (Prov. 13:15). "*A way that seemeth right*" (Prov. 14:12). "*The way of man*" (Prov. 5:21). These ways are all wrong and are hated by the lord (Psa. 119:104).

But when we turn to Acts 16:16-17 we will find

that the Apostle Paul and others taught a certain maid "*the WAY of salvation.*" No doubt, had some of our modern preachers been present they would have criticized the statement and said that Paul and the others were teaching "*ONE of the ways of salvation.*" But the Bible says that it was "*the WAY*" of salvation.

The truth is God's word (John 17:17). And the word says that Christ is the way (John 14:6). The doctrine of men will lead men into the broad way which leads to destruction (Mark 7:7; Matt. 7:13).

When men teach you to *get religion*, they are leading you in the *broad way*. Religion is something that the people of God are taught to DO, not GET. (See James 1:26-27).

When men teach alien sinners to *pray for pardon*, they are leading them in the *broad way* (John 9:31)

When men *vote on you* to become a member of their church, they are leading you in the broad way. The Lord "ADDS" all the obedient ones to his church; He never commanded anyone to VOTE on one to become a member of his Church. He *adds* men to his church (Acts 2:47).

When men teach you that you can be *saved in one church as well as you can another*, they are leading you in the *broad way*, for Christ is the savior of

“THE BODY” (Eph. 5:23). There isn’t but one true body (I Cor. 12:20). And that one body is the church (Col. 1:18). There is no salvation in any other (Acts 4:12).

My dear friends, turn your backs on the doctrines of men because they lead into that broad way, and the broad way leads to destruction and not heaven (Matt. 7:13).

It would be unfair to tell you that Christ is the way that leads to heaven and then not tell you how to get into him. There are five steps that one must take to get into Christ.

The first step is **HEARING** about Christ, and how he died for us (Mark 12:29; Acts 15:7).

The second step is to **BELIEVE** what we hear about Christ according to his word; for if we believe not, we will die in sin (John 8:24).

The third step is **REPENTANCE**, which means to stop our devilment, or quit the practice of all that is wrong. And, unless we repent we will perish (Luke 13:3-5).

I sometimes say that **REPENTANCE** is God’s **“RED LIGHT.”** He means for us to “stop” when we repent. If some of you would pass through the city with a load of cottonseed, when you got to the red light you would know better than to unload the cot-

tonseed there; you would understand that the red light just simply meant for you to STOP with the load and when the green light comes, you know it means for you to go on and unload. So, friends when we get to REPENTANCE, that is God's red light and he means for us to stop—doesn't want you to slow down, but STOP. So, when REPENTING, if you have been lying, STOP. If you have been dancing, STOP. If you have been playing cards, STOP. If you have been beating your wife, STOP; and if *she* has been beating *you*, I know you want *her* to STOP.

The fourth step is CONFESSING Christ. Jesus said if we would confess him before men he would confess us before his father (Matt. 10:32). That confession is made with our mouths (Rom. 10:9-10). The Eunuch confessed Christ by saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God" (Acts 8:37). You can confess Christ by saying what he said.

The fifth step is BAPTISM in water in the name (authority) of Christ, to wash your sins away (Acts 22:16). That was what Saul of Tarsus was told to do to get rid of *his* sins; and *he* was the *chief* of sinners; if it freed *Saul* of *his* sins, it will free *you*. Baptism puts one "into Christ" and he is the way that leads to heaven (Gal. 3:27).

So, my friends, if you will take these five steps thus pointed out according to God's word, you will

enter the strait and narrow way that leads to life. Continue therein until death; and when Christ shall come to judge the world, he will take you home to heaven. May God grant that many will come to this strait and narrow way before it is too late, for all who will may come. (Matt. 11:28; Rév. 22:16-17)

THE SUPREME AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

Because of the divided condition that exists in the realm of religion, it is very necessary that we call attention to this subject. Many religious people of today resent the idea of submitting to authority.

Reading from the 17th chapter of John, verses 20 and 21 we see that Christ prayed for UNITY not DIVISION. The apostle, Paul, was careful to write to the church at Corinth condemning division among them. (I Cor. 1:10) He also said "*MARK THEM which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*" (Rom. 16:17)

The authority of Christ was questioned on one occasion. After he had entered the temple, the chief priest and elders asked: "*By what authority doest thou these things?*" (Matt. 21:23)

We should not accept every one who may POSE as one in authority; because there are many false teachers in the world today who have not submitted to him who said, "*All that ye do in word, or deed, DO ALL in the name (by the authority) of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by HIM.*" (Col. 3:17)

Without some form of authority all would be greatly confused. God is not the author of confusion,

but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (I Cor. 15:33)

There was a time in the history of Israel when "*every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*" (Judges 17:6) And again we read: "*The way of the unwise is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*" (Prov. 12:15)

Just suppose that we had no standard in regard to TIME, and everyone should contend that *his* watch has the *correct* time. Or imagine a group of people playing a game of BASEBALL without a rule. Suppose the railway companies had no rules by which the TRAINS are to be governed; it would be quite dangerous to ride on one. It is easy to understand that to carry on in religious matters in an orderly way, all must accept a single authority; all must walk, or be governed by the same rule. (Phil. 3:16b)

If all would accept, and be guided by the same rule, the religious world would not be divided into sects and parties; there would not be so much religious strife and confusion. The present state of division will not be cleared up until all are willing to accept a single rule as a divine standard—and that is the word of God.

But WHAT or WHOM should be recognized as the SUPREME AUTHORITY in religious matters? Some rely on their FEELINGS, others on their

CONSCIENCES, and yet others will say that the MAJORITY is right.

The majority was *wrong* in the days of Noah; only eight souls were saved. (1st Pet. 3:20-21) When God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gommorah, he could not find ten righteous persons. (Gen. 10:32; see also 2nd Pet. 2:6-7)

Many are following their parents as if *they* should be recognized as supreme authority in religion. It is very dangerous to follow our parents for authority in matters of religion. Read the following: Deut. 27:16; Matt. 10:37; Lk. 14:26)

We should follow CHRIST (John 8:12). Christ's sheep WILL FOLLOW HIM (Jno. 10:28-9).

Finally, some will say, "*I know that I am safe for I am following my PASTOR.*" Some of the PASTORS of old became BRUTISH (Jer. 10:21). They destroyed and scattered the sheep of God's pasture. (See Jer. 23:1) They led God's people astray. (Jer. 50:5-6)

The Savior said that if the blind lead the blind, BOTH shall fall into the ditch. (Matt. 15:14b; see also Isa. 9:16) Man, being fallible, stands in need of a divine guide. (Jer. 10:23) God directs the steps of the righteous. (Psa. 37:23) We walk by faith in order to please God. (Heb. 11:6; 2nd Cor. 5:7) There is

but ONE FAITH. (Eph. 4:5) Therefore, ONE RULE (Phil. 3:16b)

Let us now settle the question. WHO is the SUPREME authority in religion? It is HE who said, "*All power (authority) in heaven and in earth is given unto me.*" (Matt. 28:18b) The Father loved him and gave ALL things into his hand. (Jno. 3:35) God said, "HEAR HIM" (Christ). (See Matt. 17:5b) For in him (CHRIST) he is well pleased. (Matt. 3:17)

We can see from the foregoing that there isn't any AUTHORITY left for modern BISHOPS, PRIESTS, and those who rob God of his title by calling themselves "REVEREND." This title belongs to God only. (Psa. III:9)

Moses told Israel that the time would come that whosoever would not HEAR CHRIST would be cut off from among the people. (Deut. 18:18-19; Acts 3:22:23) We must do ALL in the NAME (Authority) of Christ. (Col. 3:17) We cannot enter the kingdom of heaven and be saved unless we do his will. (Matt. 7:21) Therefore we should seek to understand his will. (Eph. 5:17)

Christ promised to save the obedient. (Heb. 5:8-9) So, in order to be saved one must *hear* that Christ died, was buried, and rose from the grave (Heb. 2:1); then *believe* that (Jno. 8:24); then turn

from all sin by *repentance* (Acts 17:30-31); then *confess* Christ before men (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10); then be buried with Christ in *baptism* (Rom. 6:4-5; Col. 2:12).

Then you will be saved, and all of your past sins will be washed away (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5b). By doing these things you will completely submit yourself to **THE SUPREME AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.**

STUMBLING BLOCKS

This subject should be observed by every member of the Lord's church, because we ourselves sometimes come to be STUMBLING BLOCKS.

Reading from Rom. 14:13 the great apostle said: *"Let us not judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."*

Reading from the apostle's letter to the church at Corinth he says: *"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours becomes a STUMBLING BLOCK to them that are weak."* (I Cor. 8:9)

Another reason we should be careful is because in many things we ALL STUMBLE. (Jas. 3:2) We should not let old sins continue on without remedy, but rather confess them and pray for forgiveness; for as long as they are not confessed, many who are weak may stumble over them.

We should confess all public sins to men, and if we have those which are not known to men, we should go to God and confess to him. (Psa. 19:12) He will forgive our sins and mention them no more. (Ezk. 18:21) We must repent of them, then pray to God. (Acts 8:22) *"For he that covereth his sins shall not prosper; But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."* See Prov. 28:1. We read also

from Jas. 5:16, "*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed.*"

David, the prophet, said: "*Cleanse thou me from secret faults.* (Psa. 19:12b)

It isn't a disgrace to confess our sins; but it may be to hide them. The apostle Paul once wrote to the church at Corinth and asked to be forgiven his wrong. (See II Cor. 12:13) So if confessing wrongs is a disgrace, Paul surely disgraced himself.

Sometimes we will fight, quarrel and use language that isn't becoming to a Christian and do many other things that will cause others to stumble and never ask the one offended to forgive us. But when some one does US any wrong we are ready to DEMAND a confession of him.

Some congregations are almost ruined because when we do wrong we are too stubborn to confess it. You know when Jonah was on the ship trying to get away from going to Nineveh, the ship was about to sink. Jonah confessed that he was the cause of it, and many lives were saved by throwing him overboard. Sometimes the church may be overloaded.

The attitude on the part of the wrongdoer is brought about because he does not love the church. If we have the love of Christ in our hearts we will love those who do us wrong and will not so conduct

ourselves as to show hatred toward them. The Lord said for us to love our enemies, and do good to (not hate) them who hate us. (Matt. 5:44)

When you find some one who is offended at you, go at once and be reconciled. In doing this at once you will avoid making a stumbling block of your wrong. You will save the church and yourself, too.

The world is watching us; and the devil is tickled when we hate and scorn each other and sometimes fail to speak to each other.

The apostle said: "*Love beareth all things.*" (I Cor. 13:7) If we don't have the love of Christ we are not going to bear very much. We must learn to be kind and tender-hearted (not stony-hearted), forgiving one another. (See Ephe. 4:32).

Another thing that causes many to stumble is that some of us do nothing but sit and complain. We find fault with others and with everything. The bread for the communion wasn't cooked right; the sermon was too long; the prayer was terrible; the preacher didn't do what we thought he should; his language wasn't very good; his trousers weren't pressed; he talked too much about money. (Paul said a lot about money, and, before he died, said that he had a crown laid up.) (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

We find fault with the elders, or maybe one com-

plains that he is ashamed to bring visitors to services because the preacher does not dress well, or his wife isn't very friendly, while at the same time he himself may not be as friendly as he should be toward others. We should know that man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looks on our hearts. (I Sam. 16:7)

Yes, we just want to find fault! Wouldn't it be better to send the cleaner around to pick up the preacher's clothes rather than find fault with them? Why not support the preacher well so that such things can be cared for? You should know that no gospel preacher preaches on earth and boards in HEAVEN! The Apostle said: "*They that preach the gospel should live by the gospel,*" or, rather, OF THE GOSPEL. It would be nice to take the preacher around the barber shop and have his hair cut; that would be a great help to any gospel preacher.

My dear Christian friends, let us be **shining lights** rather than **STUMBLING BLOCKS**, and God will bless us in this life. And, if we live faithful to him, he will give us a home in heaven.

FEELINGS OR FACTS?

We should very readily admit that FEELINGS play a great part in life; for that is the only way we know that we have headaches, toothaches, neuralgia, rheumatism and so on. God has fixed it in his wise providence that man is blessed with the sense of FEELING, but never has he commanded us to be governed by our FEELING as an evidence of PARDON or SALVATION.

Many honest persons have never learned just how far our feelings are to guide us, and some have carried our feelings into our spiritual life. But, my dear friend, they won't fit there. It doesn't matter how sincere we may be about the way we FEEL about our sins being forgiven. It just hasn't happened until we comply with the plan that God has given in his written word, through the inspired apostles, in the New Testament.

"FEELINGS" have many fine people saying that one can be saved without the Bible, which is the word of God; but they have no Bible proof for such claims. The Bible says the engrafted or implanted word is able to save your souls. (Jas. 1:21) After our savior was raised from the grave, he met a number of his disciples at a place appointed, and commanded them saying, "*Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the*

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost . . .
(Matt. 2:16-19) See also Mark 16:15-16.

“FEELINGS” are causing many to say they are baptized with the HOLY GHOST today; and if it wasn’t for the Bible, we would have to take what their feelings cause them to say. If they are baptized with it as the Apostles were, they should be able to write the will of God as the Apostles did without a printed copy or manuscript. Almost every one, who claims he is baptized with it, usually carries his Bible around. Do you know why? It is because he NEEDS it to guide him.

We are told in the word of God to prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good. (I Thess. 5:21) Not one out of the thousands who claim the BAPTISM of the HOLY SPIRIT can prove it.

Bible facts show that God himself furnished the proof that the apostles were baptized with it—by miracles, signs and wonders. See Acts 2:43; Heb. 2:1-4. These facts make me know better than to take what these people say because of their FEELINGS.

“FEELINGS” are what cause a very great number of our fine religious friends of the denominational world to say they “HAVE” religion. It is really sad how many FEEL that they have religion, even though no one can show a command to “GET IT” through the Bible from lid to lid. But the Bible says,

"Blessed are they that do his commandments . . ."
(Rev. 22:14)

When one goes out to "GET RELIGION" he has done something God did not command. Religion is mentioned at least five times in the Bible, and it is not connected with any form of command in any of those places. Read Acts 26:4-5; Gal. 1:12-14; James 1:26-27. This will let you see what FACTS say about Religion.

May the God of heaven help us to get the RIGHTLY-DIVIDED truth to the world, in order that those who are honest with God and themselves may soon have the opportunity to obey the gospel of our lord and be saved from their past sins. In order to obey the gospel of Christ we must first hear of his suffering, death, burial and his resurrection (Acts 2:37); then we must believe (Heb. 11:6; Jno. 8:24); then we must repent (Acts 17:30-31); then we must confess Christ (Acts 8:36-37); then we must be baptized, for baptism saves (I Pet. 3:18-21; Mk. 16:15-16). Baptism brings one into Christ (Gal. 3:27), and washes sins away (Acts 22:16). When you do these things you will be sure and won't have to rely on FEELINGS.

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